

Looks like Bill W (edit: was an un-treated sex addict) had a sex problem too
Posted by feedtherightwolf - 25 Apr 2010 00:09

I am on my 9th month in a 12 step program (SAA), and have almost 6 month of sobriety. I think 12 step approach is great, and learning to live my life in accordance with the will of God instead of my own will was the most beneficial lessons of my life.

I think Bill did a great part on explaining how a person can learn to establish a connection with God that would work for him, and help him to live his life better.

That being said, I do feel a little bit uneasy about "almost religious" way that some people view the big book of AA. My biggest problem with it, is that it was written mainly by a guy, after being sober for less then 3 years. What bothers me the most is when Bill says "There were many unhappy scenes in our sumptuous apartment. There had been no real infidelity, for loyalty to my wife, helped at times by extreme drunkenness, kept me out of those scrapes." Being an addict in recovery this sounds like something I would say, when I was trying to cover something up.

But the most important quote that I just recently discovered comes from an interview by Francis Hartigan(author of Bill W., A Biography of Alcoholics Anonymous Co-Founder Bill Wilson) of Tom Powers (Co-author of Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions):

"All the while we were working on the 'Twelve and Twelve,'" Tom said, "I would argue with him, 'you're killing yourself. And think about what you're doing to Lois!"

While other people I spoke with insisted that Lois never knew about Bill's affairs, Tom insisted that "Lois knew everything and she didn't have to guess about it, either. A lot of people tried to protect her, but there were others who would run to Stepping Stones to tell Lois all about it whenever they saw Bill with another woman.

I asked Tom how Bill reacted when Tom would insist that Bill's guilt over his infidelities was responsible for his depressions.

"I think that was the worst part of it," he said. "Bill would always agree with me. 'I know,' he'd

say. 'You're right.' Then, just when I would think we were finally getting somewhere, he would say, 'But I can't give it up.'

"When I would press him as to why the hell not, he would start rationalizing. What would really kill me is when he'd say, 'Well, you know, Lois has always been more like a mother to me.' Which somehow was supposed to make it all right for him to cheat on her."

Tom himself had also been sexually compulsive even after he quit drinking, and he found it very hard to change his behavior. ...

Tom said that it took him five years after he quit drinking to change his behavior in this area, and for five years after that, he tried to get Bill to change, too. "Besides what he was doing to the women he was chasing and to Lois, his behavior was a huge source of controversy in AA," Tom said. "He could be very blatant about it, and there were times when it seemed like the reaction to a particularly flagrant episode would end up destroying everything he had worked for. But then people would scurry around and smooth things over, or cover it all up."

According to Tom, Bill's behavior caused some of his most ardent admirers to break with him. Eventually, Tom broke with Bill, too.

"I told him that I still considered him to be my sponsor, but that I didn't want to work with him anymore. I said that I hoped we could be friends, but I didn't want to have anything more to do with him publicly. I just couldn't go on feeling as though I was in any way supporting what he was doing to Lois — and to himself.

"Bill said, 'Fine. I feel the same way about you, too,' and we shook on it. As though it were some mutually agreed upon parting of the way, with fault on both sides. Which was a real switcheroo, you know. I think he knew that I saw right through it, but I guess it made him feel better not to have to take responsibility for destroying what had been a very enjoyable and productive working relationship."

I want to make it perfectly clear that I am not saying that 12 steps do not work, they do, and I know a lot of people who are a good example of it, both in person as well as on this site .

I just wanted to share this information because for me it was a good reminder of 2 things:

1. In order to be happy I can't just stop one addictive behavior, and turn to another, I must follow the way of God in all areas for the rest of my life.
2. The twelve step groups are full with different kinds of people, and it is very important for me to be careful with what I hear or see other people do, and always consult with my higher power.

Or as my sponsor puts it "take what works for you, and leave the rest".

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Re: Looks like Bill W was an un-treated sex addict
Posted by Dov - 25 Apr 2010 04:51

Very well-written and informative post, FTRF. Thanks!

At an international conference of SA in Cleveland about ten years ago, a program buddy of mine told me all about Bill's problem you describe here. Some of the guys went to visit Dr Bob's place in Akron, etc., and there was some AA history talk. Bills problem was a big deal to some guys, but as he was already dead and I was sober a few years because of what *he* started, it didn't phase me.

I guess he just never got around to **having** to face it because it didn't yet threaten his sobriety from **alcohol**. Most addicts I know, are eventually forced to face any other thing they are out of control with because it is just a matter of time till it brings them back to their insanity. And then they may drink. It's amazing how screwed up in the head we can be without destroying ourselves - but I've gotta believe that it'll eventually catch up to us. Then look out.

The other idea I feel obligated to say (though it may not apply to Bill) is that I personally believe that just because a guy has an affair or even a couple of affairs does not mean to me that he is sexaholic (or lustaholic, or whatever term you prefer). It's not healthy for me to diagnose others. AA's question is: "Does it make **your** life unmanageable?" Whether *I* find **your** behavior unacceptable or feel that it is ruinous is not the issue, nor is morality, nor is G-d's Will (the Torah). That's how I see it. Thank-G-d others will see it differently. I hope it works for them.

Perhaps I am dead wrong, but the attitude is important in order for me to maintain my own sobriety.

Be well, and please keep posting!

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Re: Looks like Bill W was an un-treated sex addict
Posted by feedtherightwolf - 25 Apr 2010 17:58

Dov,

Thank you very much for your response. You are very right when you say "It's not healthy for me to diagnose others." , "diagnosing others" is something I tend to do sometimes. It does not help my recovery and pushes them away from theirs.

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Re: Looks like Bill W (edit: was an un-treated sex addict) had a sex problem too
Posted by mosheross - 05 Sep 2010 19:48

1. In order to be happy I can't just stop one addictive behavior, and turn to another, I must follow the way of God in all areas for the rest of my life.

Regarding the above, I know that for me, personally, addictive behavior IS my problem - anytime I look outside of myself, and outside of Hashem, to feel happy, joyous and free, I'm already on the way down. I'm feeling restless, irritable and discontent, and recently picked up nicotine again after some 15 years of being clean, sober and nicotine free. And coffee. I'm still 4 years sexually clean, but I'm feeling very lost right now, very down...

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